



## FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

### Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, September 8, 2023 Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

**Approved**

**Members in Attendance:** Oron Atkins, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Ruby Lewis, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippett, Cris Tobola.

**Members Absent:** none

**Refuge Staff in Attendance:** Bryan Winton.

**General Members/Guests in Attendance:** none

President Mary Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**Agenda:** the agenda was unanimously accepted after a move to so do by Mickey and a second by Phil.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Dick, seconded by Kim to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2023 meeting of the board. This motion passed unanimously.

**Interim Motions:** One motion was made and approved in the interim since the July 14<sup>th</sup> board meeting:

- Phil moved, and Ed seconded the motion that **“The FOBWR will provide each new member of the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce a one-year membership”** The motion passed unanimously with 9 yeas.

**Grant Activity:** Following the suggestion of Bryan and Bryar Johnson, two applications were submitted to the Galveston Bay Estuary Program for grants to stabilize sections of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuge.

- Cordgrass Planting for Coastal Resiliency requests \$200,000 to contract the planting of cordgrass to induce sediment accretion behind ~14.5 miles of breakwater along the intercoastal canal that passes through the refuge. Some planting by volunteers would be scheduled.
- The Salt Lake Native Marsh Shoreline Protection Project requests \$100,000 to contract Bathymetric Surveys to determine the best design for ~two miles of breakwater construction. Cordgrass would be planted to induce soil accretion behind the breakwater after the grant is completed; this planting is outside of the grant.

These applications were among the eleven submissions for grants from the GBEP. Applicants will present a ten-minute summary of their proposals to the GBEP Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Subcommittee on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Mary Schwartz and Bryar Johnson will represent FOBWR applications.

**Land Acquisition:** No update was presented at this meeting.

**Refuge Update:** Bryan

- Discussions continue with TDOT on issues relating to the widening of Highway 36 through refuge property. TDOT will construct two under-road culverts for drainage and for wildlife crossing. The refuge wants to ensure that the current hydrology is maintained. The value for the 16.3 acres that will be transferred to the State of Texas is under discussion; TDOT pays at least \$15,000 per acre. Those mitigation funds (+\$244,500) will be transferred to an account held by NFWF that currently contains \$146,000. This account is directed toward acquiring land in the Columbia bottomlands such as the 11-acre Poole tract on the corner of FM2918 and CR306. FOBWR has a \$10,000 grant from the Trull Foundation reserved toward the purchase of this tract.
- The refuge staff has yet to rationalize a list of projects for funding by FOBWR. Bryan has submitted his list, and Bryan has asked Jennifer Wilson and the Refuge Managers to look over Bryan's list to insure we have identified everything we are currently seeking funding for project support. The board will use this list to target grant and other funding. **See new Action Item.**
- Bryan noted that there were no bids for the BOEM call for leases of windfarms off the Texas coast. There was only one bid for a lease in the Gulf of Mexico south of Lake Charles. FOBWR had submitted a letter of concern to the BOEM on the impact of these windfarms on migrating and foraging birds.
- Bryan has asked Adrian Medellin to develop tract maps of Complex properties using the protocol of Onx Hunt.
- The partnership protocol between the Complex and the Brazoria County Parks Department on the adjoining Hanson County Park and refuge properties continues to be refined. Brian Frazer of the BCPD manages the oversight, which includes facilities for overnight camping. The county will install a new bridge across a creek transecting the properties.
- The complex is working with the US Corps of Engineers on permitting of the placement of dredging spoils on Big Boggy lands.
- Amanda McAdams, Assistant Director of Refuges in Region 2 (Albuquerque), will be visiting the Complex in October.
- Congressman Randy Weber (and/or his staff) will be visiting the Complex in October to better understand issues facing the refuge, such as sea level rise. Issues of shortage of staff will likely be addressed.
- Traffic counters will be installed at the entrance to the Discovery Center road on the Brazoria NWR, and at the beginning of Ivy Road on the San Bernard NWR.

**Action Items** are listed at the end of these minutes. New action items are **highlighted in yellow** throughout these minutes. Items completed or removed are:

- Developing an outreach display designed for our 10'X15' canopy has been tabled.
- We don't need a Grant Solutions account until we get a grant from the Feds.
- Prior to this meeting, Josh Macklin of the Macklin Media Group presented their capabilities to develop market/fundraising strategies. They will present a proposal prior to the November 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting.
- Dick has published the FOBWR annual review on our website.

Refuge **Treasurer's Report:** The August, 2023 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. Regina noted the \$1,000 interest from Merrill Lynch vs. the \$1 interest from TDECU, causing the transfer of money to TDECU only as needed.

The entry for Kathrine Kerstern is a court settlement and has been moved to the Law Enforcement fund.

**Web and Social Media:** Dick requested that we let him know of posting needs, such as notices of refuge walks.

**Maintenance Committee:** The summer heat has put a pause on maintenance projects.

Phil suggested that we begin restocking Cannan Bend with 10,000 minnows and 1,000 blue gill fish using Brazoria McGovern funds. Bass would be stocked in the spring. **Brian will consult with Curtis for his concurrence with this plan.**

**Capital Projects:**

- Oron's crew is taking a break from the summer heat. Everything on the to-do list has been completed including bench platforms on the Big Slough and Cannan Bend trails.
- Work on the Hudson Woods bird blind is on hold pending a decision by Curtis to dismantle/repair/or refine the current structure.
- Curtis will be consulted on the desirability of installing a pet waste station at the beginning of the San Bernard Oak Trail.

**Birds of Prey:** Phil will select birding books to be donated to school libraries during the spring season of school programs. A donor funds the cost of these books.

Phil and Dick will explore the idea of a wine & cheese fundraiser targeted to raise money for our Birds-of-Prey programs. They will look at giving programs at chambers of commerce events and soliciting funds at these meetings.

**Membership:** Mickey reported that we have 42 Life Members, 28 Annual Members, and 17 past members who are in arrears on this year's dues.

**Outreach:** Ruby noted that upcoming events include:

- XHX on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will have a tent for reptiles and another for the Wingspan activity.

- On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Sea Center Texas will hold a Red Drum Day; we may have a booth although reptiles are not compatible with this theme.
- On October 8<sup>th</sup>, we will have our first booth, along with TMN-COT at the Brookside Farmers Market. The theme will emphasize the ocean and feature beach trash and sea turtles. We will have plastic fish for kids casting.
- KBR Kids Day in Houston will be on October 21<sup>st</sup> and feature our butterfly tent, reptiles, wingspan, and birds-of-prey.
- The Sea Center Spooktacular will be from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The Angleton Presbyterian Church will hold its annual fall festival on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Monthly Walks:** The next walk will October 19<sup>th</sup> 9:00 Hanson Park, Thursday; the November 17<sup>th</sup> walk is to be determined. December 7<sup>th</sup> will be at the Peach Creak unit of the McNeil tract. January will be a walk at Hudson Woods and the February walk will be at Cannan Bend.

**Discovery Center Display:** Display refurbishment is progressing, needing birds. Insect resistance is required. Chris will look into a “safe” moth ball that may help. Sun bleaching must be mitigated. Marty will look into window films that block UV, yet transmit most of the visible light spectrum. Cost may be prohibitive, but the view would be retained as opposed to the other option of installing blinds.

**Brazosport Chamber of Commerce:** Ed will provide the Brazosport Chamber with activities on our refuges and updated photos and contact information. Bryan will review Ed’s draft before submitting to the chamber.

**Next Meeting November 10, 2023;**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register September 15, 2023				
Action Item	Who? Date Started	Due Date	Status	Comments

Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	TBD	Fixin to	Ed has gathered old newsletters and will use this as the basis for this history
Develop a Succession Plan	Mickey	TBD	Researched succession planning; no further action	The NWRA will hold a webinar on this subject on September 20, 2023
Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Phil Marty, Cris	not specified	Ongoing	The display is progressing with the addition of the bobcat and owl. Need birds; Huper has films that block 99% of UV. Cris to look into safe mothballs
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Before MC24		Construct a searchable file of FOBWR contacts, e.g., corporate sponsors and donors, sponsors and participants for MC, BoP, ATFN, members, volunteers, outreach. Marty and Lisa have given lists to Ed. Ed is in the process of combining all contact lists.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial And Neal	Ed and Phil		\$840 in donations have been received.	Ideas considered and rejected include a memorial entrance arch for the BWT pollinator garden, a granite bench with an etched design, a concrete bench with bench with imbedded tiles, and a stained glass hanging Need a proposal to cover all deceased volunteers.
Correct the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce	Ed	This summer of 2023		

information about trails on the refuges.

Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups

Mary

Summer of 2024

Mary will develop a new 15-min PPT with segments of drone footage.

Develop a budget for MC24

MC Planning Committee

Fall 2023

Include plan to increase corporate donations.

Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive

Dick and Cris Tobola

Report at Nov. 10, 2023 board meeting

The latest thinking is to archive the materials on our website. No need to restrict accessibility

Make a Shutterfly memento book of the use of McGovern funds

Mickey

The content draft is in its final stages.

Provide a prioritized list of projects for FOBWR funding

Bryan

As soon as convenient

Determine if now is a good time to stock Cannan Bend with bait fish.

Bryan, Curtis

As soon as convenient

Idea is to stock bass in the spring.

Check viability of a "safe mothball" to preserve the display in the Discovery Center

Cris

Report at Nov. 2023 board meeting.

Check out the cost of a UV film to prevent sunlight degradation of the DC display

Marty

Report at Nov. 2023 board meeting

Film would be preferable to blinds

## FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT, August 2023 Final

TDECU				\$43,426.98	*A
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$355,871.28	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$149,104.75	*G
Prepaid - McCoy's Deposit Account				\$3,859.88	
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCE</b>				<b>\$552,262.89</b>	
<b>FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>	<b>Grantor</b>	<b>Total Awarded</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	320,279.33	197,377.72	122,901.61	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	147,000.00	111,163.87	35,836.13	
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	311,072.19	13,927.81	*E
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	79,600.00	70,400.00	
20211229 Damuth Foundation Land Acquisition	Damuth Foundation	35,000.00	35,000.00	-	
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	664.00	6,336.00	
20221101 Knobloch Foundation Land Acquisition	Knobloch Foundation	118,304.00	16,300.00	102,004.00	*C
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	47,322.00	2,500.00	44,822.00	*C
20210722 Black Rail Habitat (\$78,000 Reimbursable grant)	USFWS	76,440.00	76,438.92	1.08	*H
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>		<b>\$1,236,345.33</b>	<b>\$830,116.70</b>	<b>\$406,228.63</b>	
<b>FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>Amt Allocated</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	27,916.77	26,056.71	1,860.06	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	38,862.86	15,413.68	23,449.18	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	2,773.85	-	2,773.85	
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	7,973.46	-	7,973.46	
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt	Memorial	840.00	-	840.00	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	3,121.35	-	3,121.35	



20211112 Maintenance of Public Use Facilities	FOBWR	18,399.86	1,438.67	16,961.19	
20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	211,436.29	175,862.30	35,573.99	*B
<b>TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>\$311,324.44</b>	<b>\$218,771.36</b>	<b>\$92,553.08</b>	
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		\$41,426.63	\$4,040.56	<b>\$37,386.07</b>	*E, *F
<b>FUNDS IN TRANSIT</b>				<b>\$16,110.81</b>	*I
<b>TDECU SAVINGS</b>				<b>\$15.70</b>	
<b>TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts</b>				<b>\$548,418.71</b>	

**COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS**

**NOTES**

\*I Accounts Receivable/Payable & bank activity not yet posted

\*A December 2022, Transferred \$100,000 from TDECU to Merrill Lynch

**MOTIONS**

\*B Mar 2020 Combined Hickner Memorial Fund \$51,570.00 & 2019 ATFN (net \$53,866.29) & added \$50,000.00 Hickner donation

Mar 2021 reclassified \$56,000.00 from McGovern Brazoria

\*C Jan 2023 Per grant agreements, 5.3571% allocated to Admin expenses

\*E 11/13/20 Per Board guidelines 7% was allocated to Admin expenses from Houston Endowment # 4

\*F Sept 2022 Per board approval, \$15,000 reclassified from General Donations to Operations

\*G Merrill Lynch account includes three Certificates of Deposit for \$50,000 each. Maturity dates are Feb 20, 2024, June 21, 2024, June 23, 2025.

Balance is net of unrealized market gains/losses and includes estimated accrued interest.

\*H Total Grant = \$78,000: \$76,440 for program costs plus \$1,560 for FOBWR indirect costs (reclassified to Operations Oct 2022)